

City of New Haven
Toni N. Harp – Mayor



Testimony Regarding

HB 5189 AN ACT INCREASING THE MAXIMUM FINE FOR LITTERING

Submitted by
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Senator Kennedy, Rep. Albis, thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of HB 5189 An Act Increasing the Maximum Fine for Littering.

As custodians of public space we hear constant complaints of litter and illegal dumping. These complaints have increased over time as has the litter that we have to keep up with.

Like the state, over the years the municipal workforce has been cut such that in our Parks Department and Public Works Departments we have only 50% of the staff we had just 15 years ago so the task is only getting more difficult.

The City, in an efforts to address these challenges and concerns has begun a “Clean City Initiative” bringing together multiple departments and partners to begin to develop strategies to curb this problem. We recognize that in order to combat litter and illegal dumping we need a multi-prong approach. We are working on strategies that includes increased education, citizen engagement and enforcement.

Unfortunately, one of the challenges with the enforcement strategy is that the current penalty (\$199) does not reflect the costs of addressing some large instances of dumping including the staff time required for cleanup, tipping fees and investigation, or serve as the necessary deterrent for those responsible.

It’s important to note we recognize that not all dumping is the same. Someone leaving behind a gum wrapper is very different than what we also see – the piles of debris left behind in our parks and public ways – tons of debris requiring multiple truckloads to haul away. The proposed legislation creates a ceiling, rather than a floor so that we can address both these public nuisances and the serious littering that we encounter.

Thank you for your consideration of this very valuable legislation.